

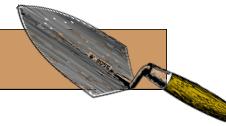


Appleby Archaeology Newsletter



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Autumn 2017



Words from the Chair

Next year sees a major milestone for Appleby Archaeology as we will have reached our 20th Anniversary! It seems only yesterday that our founder, Martin Railton, was showing me how to use a plane table on Brackenber Moor. But then I remind myself that that was in the last century. The first issue of the Newsletter appeared in the summer of 1998 and you have to scroll back a long, long way in the archive section of the website to find it.

Martin Railton was also newsletter editor then and, in his first editorial, he said that the group's aims would be to "promote a better understanding of the past" and to "provide the opportunity to take part in archaeology at an amateur level". I hope you'll agree that we've stuck pretty closely to that brief over the years.

Obviously we feel that we need to celebrate the coming Anniversary at January's AGM. We'll have a cake, of course, together with some special member's presentations. But to set the ball rolling we thought it would be nice to ask you all if you'd like to contribute your own thoughts and memories of what Appleby Archaeology has meant to you over the years. I'll contact everybody further on this next month.

At the AGM we'll also be looking for some keen volunteers to join the committee as we're going to be rather thin in the ground next year as things currently stand. I hope you'll consider coming on board. It's not a lot of responsibility and is actually rather good fun.

By October, of course, we'll be back in the Supper Room on the second Thursday of the month to start our 2017/18 lecture programme. Full details of this are now on the website and the first few talks are also listed at the back of this newsletter. Our first talk will be given by Peter Ryder who will be telling us about the medieval grave slabs that can be seen all over Cumbria and about an important recent local discovery. I look forward to seeing you there.

With best wishes, Martin Joyce

Dig Appleby in photographs



Contents

- Page 2: Indenture bill of 1478 and a Viking tool chest*
- Page 3: A Roman bath house and visits to Dacre and Barton churches*
- Page 4: Winter lecture programme*

Dig Appleby - *palaeography*

During the documentary research undertaken as part of our Dig Appleby Project. I came across a very early indenture in a folder held by the Kendal Archives. At first it was not clear what the document concerned but after working with the Archivist in Kendal and Dr Heather Falvey (Tutor in Palaeography) I have a suggestion - I think it might be part of an agreement between the Vicar of St Laurence (Lawrence) and some local individuals in 1478, relating to the maintenance of a light (a candle in this instance) for Our Lady. The people listed might have been accepting responsibility of the Lady Light and its maintenance. The amount of wax mentioned is quite large but similar amounts were used for other important lights such as paschal

candles elsewhere in the country, so it is not atypical. The document is important for a variety of reasons. It suggests that the town had recovered from Scottish skirmishing and regained some of its former prosperity. And furthermore, it is rare to learn the names of ordinary local people in a document of this age when typically only the great and good were mentioned. So for anyone researching their own family history this is an important find.

My transcript (below) and an explanatory paragraph has been placed in the archives catalogue for the benefit of future researchers. I am very grateful to the help given to me by Claire Hooson at Kendal Archives and Dr Heather Falvey

Carol Doughtery

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Viking Tool Chest

I recently visited the Historiska Museet (National Historical Museum) in Stockholm famous for the largest collection of Viking age archaeological finds in the world. One of the exhibits that caught my eye was a Viking-age Blacksmith's tool chest found at Mastermyr on the Isle of Gotland. During the Viking-age Mastermyr was a lake but it was drained between 1902 and 1910 and turned into arable land. A farmer came across the tool chest when ploughing the field. Both the tool chest and its contents are remarkably well preserved.

During the Viking era blacksmiths were tradesmen of high status, frequently travelling from place to place. It seems likely one unfortunate blacksmith lost his tool chest while crossing the lake, where it lay for centuries before being unearthed. The tool chest (90cm x 26cm x 24cm) is made of oak with iron hinges, a lock and a carrying chain of 26 figure-of-eight links. It contained 200 tools and artifacts made by the blacksmith, including, anvils, adzes, axes, rasps, sledge-hammers, hammers, chisels, a saw, two drills and some locks. Judging from the contents the owner appears to have worked in wood as well as metal and was also a locksmith

Although these tools have lost their wooden handles, they look similar to modern equivalents, suggesting the art of artisan metalworking has changed little since then. Three bronze cauldrons, three bells and an iron fire grid were found near the tool chest dated to about



The Mastermyr tool chest and contents
(with iron grid and one of the cauldrons)

1000AD. Metal working was an important craft during the Viking age. Knowledge of the craft was believed to be a gift from the Gods, some of whom were blacksmiths themselves and the processes used to convert bog iron into metal and then into tools, weapons or jewellery were a closely guarded secret.

The Historiska Museet website is at:

<http://historiska.se/home/>

Adrian Waite

Roman baths in Carlisle

I'm sure many of you will have noticed that a previously suspected, but unknown, Roman military bath house, or possibly a mansion, has been uncovered by Wardell-Armstrong Archaeology within the grounds of the Carlisle Cricket Club. Only part of the structure has so far been excavated but painted wall plaster, Roman floors and the remains of the hypocaust are all evident. Some of the finds are magnificent, many coins in particular look as though they have been recently minted. A rather fine stone fragment containing an inscription dedicated to Julia Domna, the wife of the Emperor Septimius Severus and the mother of Caracalla was also recovered. Apparently, she accompanied her husband on his campaigns north of Hadrian's Wall in around 208AD, and may have visited Carlisle on the way. Some



The Carlisle Bath House – excavations inscriptions and water pipes

nice medieval artefacts have also been found.

The site supervisor Kevin Mounsey referred to it as 'Premier League Archeology' and indeed the results of the initial excavation are rather impressive. The future of the site is uncertain at the moment. The Cricket Club had been planning to erect a new pavilion on it because of its elevated position away from the River Eden and risk of flooding, but since its discovery the Council has indicated that it would like to preserve it as a visible structure. Further exploration will help to resolve the matter. This will continue over a four week period starting on 11th September supported by a generous donation of £20000 from Fred Storey. There will be guided tours of the site between Monday 11th September and Friday 6th

October 2017 (Monday – Saturday). Initially there won't be much to see and it would probably be better to visit towards the end of the evaluation programme, when more will be on view. There will also be an open day on Saturday 7th October when a selection of finds and artefacts discovered during both phases of the excavation will be on display. So pick the sunniest day (good luck with that) and go and have a look.

Richard Stevens

Summer visits to Dacre & Barton churches

This year's Summer Visits to Dacre and Barton had an ecclesiastical theme - an odd choice you might think for an Archaeological Society. But while both sites were certainly well-worth visiting for their architectural and historical interest, they also had truly ancient foundations and in both cases archaeological techniques had had a role in interpreting these.

At St Anthony Church at Dacre, a turnout of over 30 were blessed with excellent weather, a coffee-and-biscuits welcome from the Church Council and a splendid impromptu lecture by Rachel Newman of Oxford Archaeology North. Rachel had led a major dig at the



St. Andrew's Church and its ?pre-Saxon Dacre 'bears'
(before, during and after being attacked by a ?cat)

site some years ago that had revealed fascinating evidence of Celtic/Viking-era Christian monastic activity that preceded the construction of the present church. This had long been suspected because fragments of decorative Viking stonework had turned up in various locations both within the church and in nearby properties but also, and uniquely, because of documentary references that appear to link Dacre with the 7th/8th century kingdoms that ruled the northern Border lands. Tantalisingly, however, Rachel described how the heavy stonework forming the monastic drains revealed by her trenches showed evidence of re-use from a still older phase of occupation - possibly Roman. We were also encouraged to ponder upon the origins of the four mysterious stone "bears"

that occupy the four corners of the churchyard. Clearly there is a lot more to learn at Dacre.

At Barton Church, our luck with the weather had obviously run out, but a somewhat-depleted Apparch attendance was still royally-treated by our guide, Richard Gravil who had turned up in the rain from nearby Tirril. Richard had written an excellent guidebook for the church



Barton Church (near Tyril) with C12th tower and unique double rounded chancel arches.

and knew its history and features inside out. Barton is an architectural gem where virtually nothing significant has changed since the early 14th Century. The present church was built during the reign of Stephen and Matilda in the early 12th century - but there are strong suggestions that it wasn't the first building here. The church sits on a low mound surrounded by a semi-circular wall. The hill-top fort at Dun Mallard is not far away (just behind Pooley Bridge) and the site is mid-way between the huge prehistoric monuments at Eamont Bridge and the necropolis sites at Moor Divock. Springs and a well lie adjacent to the site and it has been suggested that the building of the present church may have been prompted by an early medieval tradition of preaching and baptism by a Celtic mission, possibly connected with St Patrick or St Kentigern. It all made for a fascinating evening that left us lots to think about. Our thanks go to Richard Gravil for making us so welcome.

Martin Joyce

Winter Lectures

- **Medieval Grave Slabs of Cumbria** - Peter Ryder

Thursday 12th October

An illustrated talk about recumbent grave stones, known as cross slabs found across Cumbria, dating from the 11th to the 16th century.

- **Sequencing ancient British genomes** - Matthew Teasdale

Thursday 9th November

Technological advances in the extraction and sequencing of ancient DNA are allowing for the genomes of ancient individuals to be explored at high resolution. This talk will summarise recently published genomic data from the

ancient populations of Britain, focussing on northern England, including the results of a genetic analysis of a Roman era York cemetery.

- **Digital Archaeology** - Jamie Quartermaine

Thursday 14th December

The use of digital techniques in all aspects of archaeological site investigation - surveying, excavation and recording. Details awaited.

- **AGM and Members Evening**

Thursday 11th January

AGM and Members 20th Anniversary Talks

- **Travels of an Archaeologist** - Patricia Shaw

Thursday 8th February

Reflections on a globe-trotting year as a professional archaeologist in 2017, starting with a spectacular holiday on the Nile exploring the remains of ancient Egyptian Kingdoms and continuing with archaeological assessments of a Chalcolithic/Bronze Age site at the Slovakinian border town of Sahy and Neolithic site in Romania assisting British students supported by local Universities



- **The Headlands to Headspace Project** - Louise Martin (H2H Cultural Heritage Officer)

Thursday 8th March

Headlands to Headspace (H2H) is a major project to protect and celebrate Morecambe Bay's rich heritage. The talk will focus on the history and archaeology of the area investigated as part of a community archaeology project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This has involved the identification and assessment of a wide range of archaeological and historic sites with the help of local volunteers.

- **The late Iron Age royal site at Stanwick, North Yorkshire: new perspectives** - Prof Colin Hazelgrove

Thursday 12th April

Stanwick in the Tees valley is one of the largest prehistoric fortified sites in Europe. First occupied around 80 BC, it soon developed into a regional centre. Its 7km-long perimeter along with the exceptional Roman imports of this date suggests that the complex was the seat of Cartimandua, the client ruler of the Brigantes. The talk will show how new research is continuing to challenge accepted understanding of Stanwick.